

# RESURGENCE

BY

LESLIE G. SHAW

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Am. poems  
(1922 -  
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# RESURGENCE



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BY  
LESLIE G. SHAW



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To  
JOAN



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# RESURGENCE



## RESURGENCE

THERE was a time when ever gloriously  
Unto my heart a music, as in prophecy,  
Sang down the years—A magic golden horn,  
Heralding a valiant pageantry at morn,  
When yellow banners rose in gallant praise  
Of the mighty forward march of conquering days.  
——And then, as brief and brilliant as a dying  
sun,

Bronze tones and blazoned banners faded and  
were done.

Then others said to me, Be now mature,  
Pass by the myths of childhood, find the lure  
Of adolescence but illusions mask,  
And measure to the stature of an adult task.  
I spoke in scorn, It was a voice of truth  
I heard; Not one, as yours, in error spoke to soothe  
Me into lethargy, and so be brought  
Into your stuffy chambers of sick thought.  
——And denying ever its alloy

Still was I forsaken of old joy.—

Now fled the virgin rapture of sweet Spring,  
And Autumn's fragrant mellowness—The sting  
Of keen response to earth that one-time surged  
Like April sap in maples, upward—urged,  
Had passed, as fleeting as a bird on wing.  
Something was gone, and it was everything.

---

As if I swam and sank in oily waves,  
I knew only oblivion that laves  
The weary mind with peace and murmuring  
sound,

And visions swift; And in soft treachery bound,  
I could not free myself, until at length,—  
And years it may have been that passed—the  
strength

Of great extremity arose in me.

——I heard afar a rustling melody,  
A living symphony of hidden things,  
Of crickets chirping near green leaves, Of wings  
That swiftly beat the perfumed air in flight,  
And little buds singing their way to light.  
It trembled in my ear as the muted roar  
Of waves on a dear and long-forgotten shore.  
I wept with joy, and then I surely rose  
As by a miracle; And where I chose,  
I walked upon the languorous waves, whose power  
Had grown, mist-like, illusion in that hour;  
I cried, Now have I wakened from a dream,  
Have seen the falsehood in its lambent gleam.  
And even as I spoke, the conquering song,  
Trumpeted in golden horn so long,  
Swelled to diapason, and glowing, hung  
Like clouds of fire upon the air, and flung  
A rhythmic challenge to the listening sea,  
And sent forth tidings, not of victory  
That was to be, but victory that was,  
Over death, and sleep more dark, and ills that  
pass.

And it confirmed the steady faith that wills,  
The everlasting stars, the little hills.

“Beauty for ashes,” it sang; a long re-birth;  
Joy renewed at the mother-breast of earth.



## A LEGEND

SHE was a lover of beauty,  
And she wanted to write of beautiful things—  
“Of old, unhappy far-off things,”  
She called them.

At any rate they were nowhere near.  
But the neighbor’s player-pianos on the little side  
street

Hammered out jazz, or else  
They played “Burning of Pompeii.”  
And then there were talking machines, of course.  
And in the summer evenings  
The tremulous bleating of a cornet  
Essayed futilely to find “The Lost Chord.”  
The children fought lustily in the streets,  
And their mothers talked over porch railings of  
sales

On georgette crepe and granite ware. . . .  
And a deadly pall clouded her vision.

Until one day she remembered  
That the king of men had moved  
Understandingly among all people  
And had spoken to them in parables  
And had shared in immeasurable love  
Their pleasures or their grief.  
And then she thought that many years ago  
The futile cornetist was a shepherd  
Piping to Syrian hills,  
And the shrill-voiced women  
Were the madonnas of many an ancient twilight,  
Painted by old masters.

## ADVENTURER

EVER you wooed vicarious romance  
Wore gallantly and with a royal mien  
Your robes of poverty as you had been  
The chosen of some mighty circumstance.  
And in a bark absurdly frail you rode  
Triumphantly and sure uncharted seas—  
Untutored quite, yet with consummate ease  
You braved high storms, when lordly giants  
    strode  
Across black battling clouds—and asked no rest.  
With demon courage and a faith sublime  
You sailed beyond the rocks for some strange  
    clime  
That even you, afar, might not have guessed.  
Whatever port it may have proved, we knew  
Who knew your simple craft, that first land-fall  
Was made with colors flying, spite of squall  
Or calm, and that romance awaited you.

## IN A STORAGE HOUSE

REMARKABLE how clear my mind is,  
As to detail.—

“No, this picture is numbered 38,”

I tell the skilled packer, appallingly efficient.

And I think how I bought the picture,

One golden afternoon in Florence,

And judged just how it might wonderfully be  
placed

Above a little lacquered table.

“Yes, that goes to the auction rooms,

Along with 35 and 37.

That percolator—O, send it too;

It may bring a beggar’s dime or so.”

“But, lady—I’ll give you a dime for it.”

I attend vaguely to such subtle degradation—

“Why, how absurd of you—keep it, of course,

And that kitchen ware—and any of those little  
things.”

I think ironically how cheaply bought

Is this new aura of munificence.

“And this? Certainly you may have it;

Take it to your wife.

You have a wife?” O, yes, he had.

Most men had wives, I reflected.

Perhaps some even loved them.—

I wonder how rapidly and well

An infant cynicism grows these days.—

These packers, they need any little scrap

They can gain from the debris

Of shifting or of broken homes.  
It was just as well, no doubt, they didn't know  
How proudly that was bought, how joyfully this.  
Such a dingy and disordered kind of work  
It must be for them.  
Seeing always unbuilding—their minds  
Must be crushed under mountains  
Of stray detail—amazingly anomalous  
Are these desk contents, heaped on the floor.  
“And just one thing more—Yes, I've given you  
The address for all these different lots.  
And now *that's* done, for all of us.”  
I tell myself there's nothing left  
And the memory will be cut clean  
Like a most admirable surgical wound.  
Very cordially they take me to the elevator.  
The percolator no doubt did that.  
Somehow even the manager exudes cordiality.  
“Well, we don't usually take checks,  
But we'll take yours.”  
And my demon-clear mind  
That works so well when nearest  
The abyss of pain, records, like a camera  
His heavy jowls and kindly eyes.  
He had need for kindness, in this business,  
He who saw so much of wreckage  
And guessed much more, that wasn't there to see.  
And as the demon-camera mind works on,  
Stray flashes come from nowhere, unbidden—  
A puzzled child asking her mother

One sultry Sunday afternoon, to explain  
What she had learned that day  
About a house built on the sands—  
And a young girl in a street-car,  
Going to work,  
From whose coral lips came,  
In nasal nonchalance,  
“O, well, the first hundred are the hardest!”

## THE PURPLE DECADENCE OF 1890

*(Suggested by Holbrook Jackson's "The 1890's")*

A THOUSAND strange and curious stones in-  
laid  
And wrought in fretted gold—that flash and  
grow;

In each new light a warm and different glow—  
And scented peacock feathers strangely made.

Brocaded robes and robes of pearly frost  
And velvet cloaks and noble hats with plumes  
That undulate and vary as a flower that blooms,  
And pass 'neath palace doors with arms embossed,  
Or ride in glittering equipage to gaze  
Upon the picturesque and poor, that throng  
The London streets—those Juliets of chance  
Those passing Venuses of red romance  
Who smile and dally as they pass among  
Old scarlet poets of new and perverse ways.

The gentle dandy poetizing down the strand  
Who later clothed in Sapphic dressing-gown  
Writes those brave sonnets that the rich demand  
Or for a nod from some Earl plays the clown.

Lean hectic youths who tavernwards are bound  
In search of peripatetic days of lore  
When sages gathered at the tavern door  
To see in wine what wisdom could be found.

A thousand books in bindings rare and mellow  
With pages made unique with black and white  
And magazines bound in a classic yellow  
To put decorum in a proper fright.

The palace of varieties new born  
Where gathered minor bards who sang the charms  
Of dancing wenches, as of Helen, until morn  
Then wrote in anguished verse of empty arms.  
And "art for art" that grew strange hot-house  
    flowers,  
And made a murm'rous music for the dreary  
    hours.

## ANTIPHONY

O GOD, thou hast laid me low  
I bow my head before thy wrath,  
As a broken tree before a mighty wind.  
*But I will comfort thee.*

My deeds are scattered in the dust.  
And no good comes of them.  
My friends have forsaken me.  
*Believe in me.*

Nay, I will deny thee  
For thou hast forsaken me;  
I will dig deep into my own heart for comfort.  
*I am the living God.*

I will dig deep into the giant man  
Caged in me  
Like a mighty beast in fetters.  
*I am thy strength.*

I will proclaim my greatness.  
Men shall know that the beast is unfettered.  
They will flee before his strength.  
*Thou shalt love thy brother.*

Nay, I love him not.  
I shall conquer him:  
He shall tremble in fear before me.  
*Man's wrath availeth not.*



If wrath availeth not,  
If sin slay itself,  
What shall prevail?

*Love shall prevail.*

But my brother loves me not;  
He has mocked me.  
My heart is sore against him,

*Love begets love.*

I cannot love: my faith is dead.  
I see no beacon, rising calm  
Above the seething waves of discord.

*Thy faith shall be renewed.*

O God, that I might abandon myself  
As a seaman to the waves,  
And let thy kindness bear me up.

*Thou shalt, for thou hast so desired.*

## IVORY TOWER

**I**N silver cloth and frosted robes you sate  
And mused how strange the sounds that came  
and went

Or how in clam'ring haste the days were spent  
Beyond the quiet of your chateau gate,  
Where now forewarned all Spring did lay in wait  
The trellised roses bearing high their scent  
To you, entowered, who heeding never fate  
Saw youth go daily by and no lament.

In splendour drew and wavered in the park  
A fragrant shadow holding still faint gleam  
Of sunset's warmth, and glowed, till like a dream  
All vanished and the castle lay in dark.  
And as a barren breeze blew round the town,  
You drew your robes about you and came down.

## ANNUNCIATION

LIES beauty in all things.

Now to a barren world of freshly riven  
wounds

Comes virgin proof of life that still abounds  
And from some mystic teeming-source still  
springs.

The race is not yet run.

All is not said; nor sealed to hope the gates  
While loveliness in hiding, potent waits  
On that high time when birth shall have begun.  
Be not to Isis so unjust as to deny  
A fitting spring-time measure of deep joy!

Where mountain heights are set in mist of dreams  
And rhododendrons show pale bloom  
Against an April sky. And woodland gloom  
Gives interval of vagrant happy streams,  
And old grey rocks above the heath  
Guard this dim valley's twilight rest—  
There Spring bids us be still, that we attest  
Her living triumph over death.  
That she may new-world intimations give  
Of all that dies and still does live.

## A COMPANION

**Y**OUR thoughts, like fireflies glimpsed at dusk,  
and lost,  
And seen again, and, leading through still groves  
Now wrapped in scented solitude, where roves  
A wind before the rain—a faery host—,  
Beguile me into phantasy of foreign lands;  
And from dim shores comes an old wail of men  
Barbaric, in strange splendor, or again  
I feel the fire of sun on patient sands.

And on enchanted seas I voyage where  
Arises new temples and new shrines of art,  
And men thrill to new learning with one heart  
That through the ages they may torches bear.  
Yours is the magic word that bids me roam,  
And yours, the steady lamp that lights me home.

## THE CRICKETS

YOU sing of things of olden times  
And magic seas in twilight lands  
Of drooping sky and white-stretched sands  
And rhyming tongues in witching climes.  
How is it that your monotone  
Leaves me enchanted, and alone?

## TWO FRIENDS

YOU were a guest invited to a feast  
For whom we brought choice stores  
And placed them consciously to please  
That you might find a worthy board.

You . . . You entered by the open door  
And sat with us the while we spoke  
Of simple things . . . and shared our bread,  
A silent blessing in your love.

## FRA LIPPI'S NUN

THOU lovely one!

An age of naive peace  
And innocence, with un-increase  
Of harm—still nun—  
About thee lies.

Life's fairest gift of fruit  
And knowingness find shallow root  
In virgin place . . . For eyes  
Hast thou to see a measured plane.  
Still unaware with sweet tranquility  
And mild assurance of no part  
In worldlings motley train.—  
As in deep cloistered hush, with rarest art  
Of quietude, eternal be!

## TO A POET

**B**RIGHT child and free of Greek and glorious  
age,  
Spirit from its ampler time far-strayed,  
An Attic mind swift-flashing as a blade  
Through time-worn myths of mediocre gage—  
In you, Prometheus like, a hint of rage  
And impotence, when virile thought not weighed  
To mellowness bids your fine raptures fade  
Before reality—life's barren stage—  
A cynic hand upon a youthful dream.  
Still may you paint in colors rich as wine  
Your pagan dance where softly plays the gleam  
Of polished limb against the laden vine,  
Until at length from life's long-stagnant stream  
You draw anew old beauty to be mine.



## MEDIAEVAL WANDERER'S SONG

THE open road is my abode  
And wandering is my sweetest rest;  
New paths I roam my only home  
And every bird and beast my guest.  
And as I rove I widely love—  
I wear my heart upon my sleeve  
And it is lost at no great cost—  
Who gains so much might never grieve—.   
For one new moon I count a boon  
And every star a new allure;  
I woo this flower and every hour  
I find it most amazing pure.  
Who finds lost gleams in sunset streams  
Or greets the dawn beyond the hill  
May with me fare and all things share,  
And stay or leave me at his will.

## A GIVER OF GOOD GIFTS

*Beauty is a gift—Gautier*

**H**E said—You are all wondrous fair  
No such stars in heaven, as in your eyes  
Made quiet by lashes-dusk. And your hair  
Holds light of purple and rare bronze, and lies  
Close by your cheek in truest symmetry  
Of waves, that shine in secret, sudden lights,  
Or merge into a softest cloud.—One fittingly  
To frame a nun's white brow. Or else affrights  
Your calmer moods with tempestuous swirl  
And wantonness of brown and scornful curl.

You are no thing of one dull patterning  
Like unto a day of all drear clouds, or one  
Of same stint, changeless measure, lightning  
Only the cloud to bright and wearisome sun.  
Never from elfish art  
Might graceful wit thus stray;  
Alike of sun and shade you take a part  
To fashion your unique and charming day.  
Cool rains and April-misted nights, and blue  
Thin skies and Autumn fires are all a part of you.

Your voice conveys to me the sound of water, sing-  
ing  
In far and happy places; and the mouth that  
frames  
Sweet words has magic power of bringing  
Light to dead discourse that slower logic lames.  
Of wit and art and beauty you are wholly made.  
Nor one, nor any other part does so outvie the  
other

That any needsome grace is placed in shade  
Or man is left with power to fancy yet another.  
I know no swinish man, in courtesy  
So-called, who worthy of your slightest whim  
might be.

Your breasts are white, and sweeter yet the soul  
Of broadly loving youth, that charity to all  
Does daily know and practice. And so, whole  
In being, builds between the two no stunting wall.  
Soft are your hands and shapen so  
That music drawn from ivory keys, through  
power  
In them, is treble prized. And low  
And hush't each melody of your enchanted hour.  
And so faint music runs through all your days  
And dims with sorcery your matchless ways.

And yet, poor man, he grossly lied  
In all but this, his faith. For ever  
Has it been to man denied  
In love, the truth and seeming to dis sever.  
Grace might have been, and was, no doubt  
As grace in woman goes. But had he known  
Himself, the artist's art he had found out.  
Then birth might he have given to fool's groan—  
For thus it is, in conjuring charms, the lover  
Fails he never. He wishes for, bespeaks  
A gift (It grows to being, and another  
From depths unknown, an Aphrodite rises).  
Seeks

Vari-coloured passion from the buoyant springs  
His own; and straightway thanks unto his lady  
sings!

## LOVE AND DEATH

NOW, Death, I greet you with a willing Yea!  
Desiring nothing here on earth, I yearn  
For still and slumb'ring places, for this day  
I've drunk life deep: her fires no longer burn.

---

Forever in a twilight realm I'd hold  
Close to my heart the wondrous murm'ring voice  
Of you, who, knowing dim ultimate things,  
Proclaimed us one, and near you drew the wings  
Of rare and holy angels who rejoice  
When earth's dull chains of use and want do  
break

And earth's mean blasphemies of facile love  
Are silenced in victorious cries that shake  
The pillars of love's temple where now move  
Old priests who cower and mumble toothless  
prayer

That their dull creeds and rites shall still enslave.  
. . . Dead futile art—for in your love you bear  
Rich ageless alchemies that time's lies brave.

---

No more I'll turn and fret at prison bars  
Of sense—With you, a living flame, I rise  
Beyond all human touch, and singing stars  
I move among in night's eternal skies.  
No more I'll chafe, imprisoned in life's dream—  
In earth or heaven is no thing can change  
This splendid moment as it towers supreme  
Guarded in mysteries beyond life's range.  
Now feeling all, with striving all forgot  
With your high soul attained, I long for rest.  
Come Death! and wean me from such empty lot,  
My lips are hungry for still Lethe's breast.

## FAILURE

I SOUGHT to veil in robes of mirth, true sight  
That cried all false the fevered path of days,  
Bearing rich thought before them in a maze  
Of sound and colour ceasing not for night.  
Unto my heart I counselled, pluck this thing  
Forever out; make lyric your high power  
To gild each day and quicken every hour  
Until grief's knell you herald as you sing.

My heart surged up with promise of old strength  
And strove your well-loved image to efface  
Made for itself a palace of new grace  
And cried a splendid victory at length.  
And still as roses spring beneath their grave,  
In sleep, Beloved, my heart you still enslave.

## DA VINCI'S HEAD OF CHRIST

SO simple in thy clarity  
That with mere color and mean brush  
Wrought has he, in pale transparency,  
Spirit on cold stone: singing faith in chapel hush.

Here are no thorns; no cross:  
Only in triumph meek, that love  
That was reviled of men and knew no loss  
And from death rose, that it might prove

The kingdom that dies not: nor has birth  
But is and was, and so shall be  
Whole in itself, nor any dearth—  
Knowing no wrong in its rich purity.

Some cry, But is a victor there?  
See that wan face in very agony  
Of death: a bleeding heart laid bare.  
No victory his own. The betrayer, his Gethse-  
mane.

Flesh not the conqueror. White  
Winged faith the power. In proof true  
To an ancient promise for the night,  
"If it were not so, I would have told you."

## SUBCONSCIOUS

### *The Coward*

I STOOD beside a door where filtered through  
A glorious bar of light foretelling vast  
And airy avenues, far-winding, past  
Dusty plains to fields hill-set and new.  
I longed for high adventure, longed to find  
The promised tang of freedom down those roads  
Beyond the door; to seek out 'strange abodes  
And volatile, roam with the spring-time wind.

I pressed against the door with unsure hand  
Though knowing full the strength of my desire  
To sense the wonders hid, to feel the fire  
Of ardent strength adventuring down the land.  
Yet held by bonds of some drear natal shore,  
Unfelt till now, I faltered, closed the door.

## SUPPLICATION

**D**READ hold of night, I ask surcease  
Of your unasked dominion over that far land  
Where nightly I am borne by your strong hand  
And pray an unimpassioned peace.

Fill not my heart with whisperings  
Of ghostly days, and happy days  
Break not night-calm with whisperings  
Of love that comes, and never stays!



## AGAINST DEATH POMP

**S**TAY the barbaric hand,  
Veil the profaning eye.  
Let the dead dust be dead  
And bury it quietly, quietly.

Blaspheme not, when life has fled  
Cherish only the vital memory  
Let the dead dust be dead  
And bury it quietly, quietly.

## THE ALCHEMIST

SEEK not to make clear-known to thee  
All the tortuous ways of life  
For wisdom as apart from the blind strife  
And need of nature can no profit be.  
Great heights are there to climb.  
These shall ye know, when blossoms each high  
time.

Till then, know only that does urging press  
Deep pregnant meaning to thy radiant own.  
Turns to a magic place all it does gaze upon  
The vital sight and want of livingness.  
Then having power to much within thy gird  
Shall life outstretch at thy wise-spoken word.

## BEATRICE D'ESTE TO A LOVER

**E**NCHANTED wine you might have found,  
A draught of potent, magic Spring  
That old grey days once more might sing,  
And youth with fresher notes should sound.

Had you faint touch of alchemy  
That lonely thing, one selfless thought,  
Much loveliness you might have brought  
Through the dark night, Eternity.

For heart, not mind, our tutor is;  
All logic by its warmth is known.  
Francis of old went not alone  
Midst lepers; love was ever his.

We shall be children to attain  
That Heaven which on earth does lie  
In faith to see abundantly  
One lasting beauty with stain.

Ourselves of choice do hourly mold  
The circumstance, the daily thing,  
The vision; or at length we bring  
Unto life's shrine, a word untold.

How comes a child to Paradise  
But by his simple, eager prayer?  
Take you of earth such earthly care  
That you see not, that yet have eyes?

Had you a wish to see me bring  
Across far seas of thoughts roving  
A thousand gleaming sails of ships,  
A freight of human lore bearing  
Rich you had been, and peace your fate.  
With beggared faith, you come too late.

## THE SUICIDE

SHE seemed to us a child lost in the market  
place,  
And wondering, and quite unseeing in the din  
How there were brutal faces near, and how the  
dust  
Of many careless trampling feet hung heavy  
there.  
We saw her turning in the midst of heat and  
sound,  
Laughing and curious at the laden stalls of wares.  
Loving the brightly colored things and touching  
them  
As she passed lightly by,—and nodding now and  
then,  
Gaily, and with a pleased surprise, at some new  
face  
That looked on her in friendliness; for, like a  
child,  
She saw no strangers anywhere, but people much  
alike . . .  
A shifting pageant, wonderful and ever new;  
And in the darkening street she moved 'till dusk  
alone,  
Not minding much the jostling throng that  
pressed toward home,  
Though sometimes even she found their touch  
rough,  
Brushing her aside, unheeding all save the late  
hour.

But when the lamps were lighted in the streets,  
and stalls  
Were closed, and eager footsteps turned into  
sure ways,  
She felt that she was tired, and saw the darkness  
creep on her  
Like something nameless: and she knew she was  
alone,  
And quite apart from those who hurried home  
so busily.  
So, very tired, and seeing in the sudden dark  
A strange conspiracy beyond her grasp, she  
closed her eyes,  
As frightened children do, and trembling, fell  
asleep.

## TO A SEAMAN

*Alfred Bjorja*

I SAW you come and go with quiet mien  
All-heeding and attendant on the ruling mind  
To bend your ship's desire to sea or wind  
Or thwart, in fate, a freakish mood of spleen.  
At times of calm, you stood, a granite man  
Symbolic, carved against the western sky  
Peering from 'midst the bows as to descry  
With eyes to treachery trained, the eternal plan.  
I marvelled at your fortitude and selfless will . . .  
Unquestioning you moved as in a sick dream's  
    world  
When seas grew murderous and a great wind  
    hurled  
Tempests of ghoulish hate against your skill.  
And then one day you told me how, afar,  
You knew a ship with forty-seven sail  
And how the moonlight, gleaming fairy pale  
Lighted each swelling sail and singing spar.  
I thought that never was fidelity  
So mingled with a lover's tender artistry.

## NEUROSES

### *The Ghost*

WITH groping hands I sought for some dear  
thing  
Known well to me but distant as a dream  
Or followed, half-afraid, a dancing fitful gleam  
Of some bright joy I knew must color bring  
To wan grey days—or light a level path  
My feet had trod for lo! these aimless years—  
A path to one irresolute, of tears  
And all the plaint of a dead soul's piteous wrath.  
But never could make mine one single loveliness  
Or once see through the stifling vaporous wall  
That barred from my vague touch the sense  
of all  
Warm human-kind or simple blessedness.  
Held captive in a fainting spirits' tomb,  
My courage sickened and I chose this doom.



## THE UNDYING

**L**IFE—in one hour you burdened me  
With fleet mockeries and ghost-grey memory.

At your touch I saw, as at magic words  
A world of spreading green, a plain  
Of golden haze, where soaring birds  
Taxed the heart with melody's pain.  
And sat I goddess-like, throned and serene  
On a still mountain height, set in purple cloud.  
Where lay the world before me—As a queen  
I viewed this gem—As a queen, throne-proud.  
And you, radiant as a spring-time sun,  
As a sun blinding to unvisioned mortal eye—  
But was I mortal then, or was I one  
With laughing gods—No mortal, I.

Two demi-gods, bright with beauty of youth  
Reading the past and all that was to be  
In the depth of awakened eye. Truth,  
Deep wisdom, saw we, and serenity.  
All of beauty we had heard or thought  
Or lived—all of wonder we had ever known,  
All, time-laden, we had brought  
From that far land, whence we came alone.  
And sought the spirit of ancient lore, that sings  
Of other lives and loves that die,  
That we, knowing many things,  
Should live, in faith and guarded mystery.

Over an April sky  
A light-blown cloud  
Cold mists for a shroud.

No one knows  
Where swiftly goes  
The fragrance of the rose.

Where goes the soul of music, in chord and chime,  
The laughter of a child;  
That short allotted time—  
Harmony of all tones, sweet and wild,  
Time when pulse and eye and hand  
Tell in one short and poignant breath  
More than mind has ever planned—  
Go these things down to death?  
To a still black river of death,  
Whence rises a chill grey cloud  
To meet a barren dawn, that cries aloud  
To Earth—Beauty to me restoreth!

It was never so.  
We know, not knowing how we know,  
All we have felt or dreamed on earth shall grow  
Into the web of time, and shall before us go,  
Till myriad-sensed, we fixed shall be  
As tranquil stars, in the long night, eternity.

*1916.*

## SYMBOLIC

GREY clouds have gathered and have hung  
G Day-long with leaden weight, as malice  
They had felt, so to hide the sun,  
No life is in the air, nor do  
The leaves stir, as when the breeze taunts them.  
Toward a weary night, the day has spun herself,  
Half fainting, she closes skeptic eyes.

And now through darkening mists  
Break forth a hundred waves of gold.  
Giving new-world glimpses of radiance:  
In pure and aureate light are consecrate  
A spire, a roof, a village now re-born,  
As on a high and fore-told hill were set  
A magic city, so the twilight change is wrought.

## THE MOTHER

**A**LL night long she moved not  
Nor left, close by the bedside,  
The low chair: but watched the flickering rays  
Light wistfully the small white face.

Grief drowned in grief, and beaten,  
Faith listless, hope forgotten of the past,  
Anguish beyond her frozen world,  
Passive, she watched her child.

No tears had she, nor any bitter plaint.  
The childish hands were still, and so was she.  
Her one life's flower was broken,  
And dead, and far more dead, was she.

## THE LIVING DEAD

CREATURES of shade and cold half-light  
Dwellers of tombs and ways withdrawn  
Mystically filling the living dawn  
With ghostly hint of strange foresight . . .  
These quiet ones at day do cease  
Their hold . . . And home toward lifeless peace.

Not such we fear; the visitants dread  
Are those dear living—more distant  
Than a foreign land, whose loved implant  
Shall sorrow bear—the living dead!  
These come like dreams of shadowed lands  
And touch us nightly with regretful hands.

## REST

YOU are the shrine to which I come—  
A cooling spring,  
Where tyrant moods and fevers vain  
Are given still repose: nor stirred.  
Constant and still are you, nor made to stir.  
You hold glimpses of truth, immutable,  
That ebbs not, like waters,  
Nor rises to the moon in old self-seeking  
But knows dim and quiet ways,  
Remote from earth.  
Here is deep rest, and shadow as of woodland,—  
A pause in summer's heat,  
A lull in human stress,  
Here, at your feet,  
Grant me deep sleep!

## WASTE

**L**IKE sparks borne upward on a hungry flame,  
And jewelled but one moment in the dark,  
Then breathing back into the night the same  
Brief ardor of their birth, so my thoughts rise.  
For life, a monster flame, with fabled greed,  
Thus bears me on, devouring good and ill,  
Splendidly loyal to an atavistic creed,  
Unheeding any plaint that aught be spared.  
And, as the spreading evil tongues possess  
First one, and then another blessed shrine,  
Light eagerly, then char, each loveliness,  
These wistful wraiths, like souls released, ascend.  
And deeds conceived to crimson all the skies  
With brilliant pageant-blaze, and guide its wrath,  
As fleeting as such ghostly sparks, arise  
Above the havoc flame, and glow, and die.

YOU were a voice heard in dreams,  
 Heard dimly, and buried  
 In the dark caverns of sleep.  
 Buried until a time might come  
 When need should call it forth.  
 —For no thing in dreams is lost.  
 And the voice spoke of peace,  
 “Be not troubled, my child;  
 Neither have fear.  
 For in your breast  
 Is a giant in fetters.  
 If you will release him,  
 He will do your bidding.  
 Hidden in you are many wonders;  
 When the time comes, they will unfold.  
 Do not stifle them in fear.  
 Live greatly.  
 Learn to live as a swimmer  
 Who abandons himself to treacherous waves,  
 And finds himself borne up.  
 Do not fear, my child;  
 And know always that I am here.”  
 Thus you spoke to me silently,  
 And your message was borne  
 Down windy caverns of sleep—  
 Strange and alien vistas.  
 And a faint remembrance  
 Filled waking hours with mystery,  
 With tidings as a shadow,



That spoke of an approaching form.  
And when the dream was fulfilled  
And the fore-shadowed hours appeared,  
They were in turn  
Like fevered pictures in a dream.  
For they were filled with discord  
And with ghoulish figures,  
And menacing tongues.  
And then I heard your voice, antiphonal,  
Rising and falling in a conquering rhythm,  
And at length rising above  
The savage discord.  
And again you said,  
"Do not fear, my child;  
Know always that I am here."  
And I knew I listened to words of love  
—Of a great far-seeing love,  
That harbored no images of self  
But tended as an acolyte his shrine,  
The services of deep devotion.  
And my heart leaped up  
When I heard aright  
The words that had run, like a minor melody,  
Through a maze of days and nights.  
It was as if silver trumpets  
Had proclaimed a glorious victory.  
And my heart echoed and answered  
With a single cry,  
As that of a child who was lost,  
And finds again the path of love.

## LISA GIOCONDA

**I**N the twilight of beauty you sit by old rocks  
Where the evening of time hangs a mantle of  
cloud  
'And shadows of purple, dusk-tinged, as a veil—  
Strange enchantress, your dim secret magic  
enshroud.

You have looked on far shores where rare splendours arose  
And have felt yourself sway on the tide of desire  
Toward new seas whence came ships from ports  
charmed and unknown—  
From the great Renaissance and its consummate  
fire.

You have voyaged time-free to all lands and all  
climes,  
Through the ages have been as a seer without  
age:  
You have known the meek heart of St. Francis  
or Anne  
And have trembled war-girt with a monarch's  
high rage.

A story is told of a princess long dead  
Through centuries of lore in sarcophagus found—  
As of old radiant still with a grace from which  
    death  
Has fled shamed—and her beauty is yours,  
    mystery-crowned.

As a prophet of youth clothed in garments of time  
With faith visioned and calm you foresee all  
    strange ends  
And await that far shore where the sought is  
    the found  
And the child with old craft to a new peace  
    ascends.

## TO A WOOD-THRUSH

OF dim and twilight ways you give us sight  
When slowly all that still is, and withdrawn,  
And mellowed after days long—wearied dawn  
Finds shelter in the hour of coming night.  
And now you magically at dusk create  
With elfin silver flute, a dim forecast,  
Lost in its weight of tranquil thought, of massed  
And shadowed groves, where old gods meditate.

Bewitched and still they pause erewhile to free  
Unto your charmed cadences a vast  
And myriad sense. High captives till has passed  
That brief and poignant spell;—as mortals, we  
Do know alike a moment blessed, and live  
That time, your cool and faery voice does give.

## CHALLENGE

STRANGE, still—this thing—that you,  
Who shatter with a careless hand  
Each beauty of a gentle hue  
And mutely murderous still stand  
Should thus exempt from penance be,  
Drowning in sense all sensibility.

## A MEDIAEVAL PORTRAIT

**T**WILIGHT of beauty! Gentle repose  
After a youth's bright noon;  
When soft forebodes the tranquil moon  
Of night. Purple shadows close  
Around that still-poised head . . .  
Setting perfect for a queen of hidden ways  
Who likes not the inquietude of day's  
Swift images, through tortured fancy led. . . .  
You are a harp, with muted golden tone,  
Touched by the fingers of stars, on hills, alone.

TO ———

AH! Sing to me until senescent stars  
Fall wearied at the sound of an old plaint  
More sad than time . . . a sonorous chant grown  
faint

At dawn . . . Of souls in bondage, and of scars  
Born of the spirit's groaning fabled yoke.

Now let me hear Delilah's subtle voice  
Of faithless passion, murmuring rejoice  
In scarlet victory, 'ere day awoke.

Sing me words, tear-edged, as with Isolde's lyre  
Lulled Tristan in a perfumed, swooning sleep;  
And cast your spell of evocation deep  
About me, like an evanescent fire.

Ah! golden vessel wrought to hold the wine  
Of very life, a little while be mine!

## FORGIVENESS

**I**F I should see you turning where that old  
path winds  
My heart would leap with ancient joy and cer-  
tain pride,  
And for an instant I'd forget a gulf more wide  
Than centuries . . . that lies between two faith-  
less minds.  
And I should see with older and with truer sight  
The unchanged vestures of an inward unchanged  
grace,  
That meant for me—how long it seems—a hidden  
place  
Of peace, and ever in the darkness a sure light.  
Ah! If I held that vision through the night till  
dawn  
You might return again to wake me from a dream  
More real than death—that only dims the fitful  
gleam  
Of earthy lamps, when earth's senescent glow  
is gone.  
And like a homing bird that wings, long-lost,  
apart,  
My love would swiftly rise and nestle in your  
heart.



## NOCTURNE AFTER CHOPIN

PIPING of a hidden lute  
Faery, drowsing, distance-hushed  
Colored with a twilight note  
Of massing waters, now dusk-brushed  
Bearing shadowed messages  
Of other peace and stiller rest,—  
Calm that fairer dawn presages  
Fairer dawn and stiller rest.  
Yield thyself to magic hands,  
Walk nightward where white beauty gleams!  
This shall be a dreamless night  
Haunted by a thousand dreams.

## THE ISLES OF THE BLEST

*Tao*

AS waves that lap a strange and mortal shore  
Dim music pulses on the shores of time  
Where tranquil and immortal dwell enisled  
And quired in golden solitude, the blest.

*They rise, rise ever, past labor and longing,  
Past labor and longing, here dwell the blest.*

They burn with the light of peace, the blest,  
Where, knowing all and striving never,  
They pause, 'ere the white dawn of Paradise.  
Attuned to time, the blest, where the rhythm  
Of peace is one with the swell of timeless waves,  
Like music, lapping on eternal shores.







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